



State of South Carolina
Office of The Lieutenant Governor

André Bauer
Lieutenant Governor

Office on Aging
Cornelia Gibbons
Director

For Immediate Release:

February 17, 2006

Contact: Frank Adams
(803) 734-9912
adams@aging.sc.gov

or: David Lucas
(803) 734-9917
dlucas@aging.sc.gov

Mountain View Nursing Home Leading the Way on Volunteer Ombudsman Program

Spartanburg, S.C. – February 17, 2006 – Lt. Governor André Bauer today recognized the staff and leadership of the Mountain View Nursing Home in Spartanburg for being at the forefront of a new program designed to improve the lives of residents of long term care facilities.

Mountain View is among the first such facilities to partner with the Lt. Governor's Office on Aging on the new Volunteer Ombudsman program that will enhance South Carolina's existing system of Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman Investigators. Regional Long Term Care Ombudsmen respond to complaints of substandard care, abuse or neglect in nursing homes and other residential care facilities. The new Volunteer Ombudsman program will enhance that effort by placing trained community volunteers in facilities to visit regularly with residents, participate in resident and family council meetings and help address minor concerns or problems before they become more serious. The South Carolina Silver Haired Legislature and the AARP were instrumental in working with long term care industry leaders and the Lt. Governor's Office on Aging to get the volunteer ombudsman program off the ground.

"Right now we've got 28 volunteers around the state who are trained and ready to go into a facility, and about 70 facilities that have agreed to participate," said Bauer at a press event held to raise public awareness of volunteer effort. "Our goal is for every long term care facility in the state to become a partner in this effort and to recruit enough volunteers to make sure that everyone in those facilities is getting a weekly visit from somebody with their best interests at heart."

- more -

While television cameras rolled and cameras clicked, Bauer introduced the assembled residents, staff, and guests at Mountain View to Janette Giannopoulos of Spartanburg, one of two volunteers who have completed the rigorous training and orientation necessary to become a volunteer for the Appalachia Area Agency on Aging's Regional Ombudsman. The other volunteer, Lamar Bailes, will be assigned to another facility in the region.

"They have a passion for helping other people," Bauer said of the volunteers. "You are truly doing God's work, and we appreciate you giving your time and effort to this."

Bauer also singled out Mountain View Administrator Wilson Dillard and South Carolina Health Care Association President Randy Lee for praise for their efforts at bringing the new program to life.

According to Dillard, the program will be instrumental in helping to address one of the biggest anxieties that people entering long term facilities have, a fear becoming separated from the outside community. Regular visits from the volunteer ombudsman assigned to Mountain View "will help bridge that gap" for new residents, he said.

Individuals interested in serving as volunteer ombudsmen should contact Program Coordinator Cheryl Stone in the Lt. Governor's Office on Aging at 1-800-868-9095.

-- ###--